to undertake higher studies. All universities, engineering colleges and other institutions of higher learning in the country are being networked for a supplementary programme of Distance Education for improving the quality of education including IT education. IITs, IIMs and other institutions have been asked to promote IT related programmes and launch speciffic courses in association with software industry.

The Ministry of Information Technology has, through a Pilot Project called IMPACT, followed by another project called Sustainability Support Scheme, in selected 14 engineering colleges upgraded the quality of education and training in the press of electronics and computers, including software training and education. Continuing Education Programmes (CEP) were also conducted, each year, by the faculty in these colleges. Infrastructural facilities were also enhanced in the project institutes by providing equipment.

Primary Health Centres

*673. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA': Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Primary Health Centres (PHCs) in the country and the number of those actually functioning;

(b) the number of PHCs set up in the country during the last five years;

(c) the average cost per PHC in the country; and

(d) the average number of persons benefited per PHC?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI N.T. SHANMUGAM): (a) The number of Primary Health Centres functioning in the country as on 31.12.98 is 23179.

(b) During the last five years, 1280 Primary Health Centres have been set-up in the country.

(c) In setting-up of a Primary Health Centre Rs. 24.50 lakh as Capital Cost (one time expenditure) and Rs. 13 lakhs recurring/cost per annum is required.

(d) On an average, 30771 persons are benefited by a PHC.

Malnutrition among Children

*674. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state: